

Mr. Larry Gottheim
Cinema Department
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Dear Larry,

I have followed the development of the video art of Ralph Hocking since 1968 summer. Ralph Hocking started video art in early 1968. That makes him one of the earliest video artists in America. Of course he did not produce video tape in '68 but conceptual design and systems thinking started then. In video art visible product like tape is not the whole thing. Invisible implicit system design is at least as important if not more important than visible product. Over the seven year period slowly I came to deeper and deeper understanding of Ralph Hocking's art. One day I suddenly found out why his video thinking is very profound and is inseparable from his prenatal experiences as a pottery maker.

Process of time is one of the most important factors in life and art. The more I work with video, the process of aging or time component becomes more important. Video is not only space art but is time art. We see ourselves 5 years ago. Pottery making is art of time and patience and guy who is able to wait, that is most important thing.

Once I visit John Cage to do some shopping. John wanted to buy some electronics stuff, and I tell him you can go to store but you have to wait twenty minutes. He said it doesn't matter because I waited all my life.

Ralph Hocking has very rich experience in pottery making and his pottery is one of the best I know. That gave him very right attitude to video.

What we want to do is not define video but bow to the nature of video and see what it does. We need broad base video because it is too young to define. Video has no traditions. Because video has no traditions and no historical definition and there is many possibilities which are opening up every year through research into world of electronics and computer the most important thing to do now is to wait like potter who puts pottery in fire oven.

Most important thing for video work is system thinking and not

producing videotape. Videotape making is an act of definition and system thinking is act of exploration. Ralph Hocking has concentrated for the past five years in his excellent directorship of the Experimental Center in Binghamton on the specific point that he wants to know what can be done with video electronic system. He has broadest approach to process art of video. It includes everything - portapak through community service, multi-channel video, dance, live performance and various degrees of video synthesis by various engineers.

Another most important thing is that he must be able to work with people. Personal video is interesting, but I feel that video is a string quartet where 4 men have to love each other and work with each other. Ralph Hocking's quality to work with people and assemble the personality collage in his Center is one of the most important things that qualifies him as video artist and teacher and systems thinker.

Binghamton Experimental Center is the most advanced place in the world in hardware assemblage and training and it has various generations of hardware from 1940s TV to the most modern color synthesizers. By working there the students will have a sense of history and knowledge of hardware development. The Binghamton Center has not only assembled past hardware technology but is the vanguard of the most advanced hardware technology and computer technology by having excellent collaboration with Don McArthur, Walter Wright, David Jones and sometimes Shuya Abe.

Altogether Ralph Hocking makes one of the most ideal teacher and video thinker in the world. I am happy to recommend him to State University at Binghamton and Binghamton must be extremely happy to have him in its luminous faculty.

Nam June Paik
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